



Photograph by Jaromir Stephany

In my work, *A Master's Guide to Pictures*, on page 55, I present a Synchronicity Systems Comparison Analysis—showing how different Synchronicity Systems provide insights into this photograph and tend to agree with one another.

I recently tried a new way of looking at photographs that involves the use of Japanese Haiku. Two creativity techniques use random word and random picture selection as a means to help solve a creative problem. Associations from pictures and words, chosen at random, can prod the mind into making new associations concerning the problem at hand. We can make an analogy and apply this technique to Haiku as well in order to help understand a photograph or a painting.

The Procedure

For this method you will need: A good book of Haiku that you can assign numbers to each Haiku within the book, access to a random number generator, and one or more good Dictionary of Symbols.

First, set the random number generator for the range of numbers that are contained in the Haiku book. Second, contemplate the photograph for some period of time and try to notice every detail within it. Third, concentrate on the question that you would like to know about the photograph—such as What is the “idea-feeling” of the photograph? At the same time, you will cast the random number on the random number generator. Next, write down the random number that is cast and look up the corresponding Haiku in the Haiku book. Now, it will be necessary to find all of the symbols in the Haiku and find them in the symbol dictionary that you are using. Look for the symbolic references that cause a resonance within you when you look at the photograph.

Example Reading

I used the Haiku book: *Japanese Haiku* by Peter Beilenson. The book is divided into 6 parts. Part 1 contains 36 Haiku, Parts 2-5 each contain 40 Haiku, and Part 6 contains 24 Haiku—for a total of 220 Haiku. Therefore, I set the random number generator for a range of 1-220.

While contemplating the photograph, and casting the random number, I obtained the number 32. The Haiku reads:

Twilight whipporwill...
Whistle on, sweet deepener
of dark loneliness

Basho

My primary symbol dictionary was: *A Dictionary of Symbols* by Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbrant.

Twilight expressed the end of one cycle and consequently, readiness for the start of a new one. It is the image of space-time—the moment when time stands still. Space and time are about to invert into another world and another night, but the depth of one heralds the birth of another, fresh space and new time, successors to the old.

Dark loneliness—is the feeling the photographer felt with wanting to find new creative expression at this time. (He had a deep concern for striking out in a new creative direction but wasn't sure of what direction he would go at the time.)

Whipporwill, can stand for a bird (birds can symbolize messengers) In this case, the messenger is the photographer.

Conclusions

It appears that the Haiku, like many other procedures, can help us to make associations which broaden our way of looking at things and help us to gain additional insights that we might otherwise not have been aware of. When used alone, it can give us a little insight that we may not be sure of in and by itself. But, when used in conjunction with other methods, it can help corroborate what we believe to be the hidden meaning of a picture.

Example of the photograph “Breakthrough to Joy”

In my book: *A Beginner’s Guide to Pictures*, the following photograph appears with the title “Breakthrough to Joy”. The title serves to show the feelings that the photograph evoked in me at the time due to circumstances in my life.

Using the procedure that I have described in order to better understand pictures, I obtained the random number 185. The corresponding Haiku poem is:

Lonely Umbrella
passing the house at twilight...
First snow falling soft.

Yaha

The umbrella can symbolize darkness, withdrawal, protectiveness. Twilight can symbolize the end of a cycle. Therefore, I interpreted this as the end of a cycle of darkness and withdrawal—which is now passing. Snow symbolizes changes and new beginnings or transformation.

Note that if we create an additive caption for the photograph, it is possible to direct and enhance the viewer’s experience.



“Breakthrough To Joy”
The darkness begins its withdrawal
and is transformed.
...A new cycle and new beginnings

